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Introduction

Sparks (1992) and Loader et al. (2000) have argued that fear of crime will typically exceed real risks because it presents as a 'condensation symbol' : it is '…a means of registering, and making intelligible, what might otherwise remain unsettling, yet difficult to grasp, mutations in the social and moral order.' (Loader et al. 2000:66). As such worries and talk about crime are rarely a reflection of objective risk or behavioral change, but are bound up in a wider context of meaning and significance, involving use of metaphors and narratives about social change. Communal bonding shapes the scale of the crime threat and informs a crimogenic order in which some crimes are marked as extreme threats to the social order and others are dismissed or ignored. In this way, talk about crime is about more than crime (Hollaway and Jefferson 1997; Walklate 1998). In this paper we examine the specific social contours associated with the production and mobilisation of crime-talk in a rural and/or isolated setting. The issue here is not whether or not crime is increasing, but how crime-talk might be grounded in the region's social order and social relations within it.

Following Girling, Loader and Sparks (2000) the term 'crime-talk' has been adopted in preference to 'fear of crime' to distinguish the current study from a significant body of literature which has developed around fear of crime, much of which has been devoted to the causes of crime, victimization, measurement of fear and policies to reduce fear (see Ditton and Farrall 2000). As Hollaway and Jefferson (1997:257) observe, this body of work has been grounded in "the idea that crime is unproblematically a 'problem' and that people's perceptions are unproblematically 'real'". What is missing from the literature is what Walklate (1998:552) has described as fear of crime as a comparative analysis of *perceptions* of disorganisation and dangerousness. A problem of the fear of crime literature is that it is not often clear what fear is or that it might be multi-dimensional in its meanings and abstractions, cognitive and emotional dimensions. Notably, not all causes of fear are crime specific (Wilcox 1998, Lee, 2007). More significantly for this study, crime-talk may offer a place sensitive sociology of public sensibilities towards crime. As such, the term crime-talk is used to highlight the complexity and variability of cultural sensibilities relating to the perception of crime, which is often lacking in the survey-based research.

Using Elias and Scotson's (1994) theory of established-outsider relations, the paper examines how the organisational capacity of specific social groups is significant in determining the quality of crime-talk in isolated and rural settings. In particular social 'oldness' or 'embeddedness' and notions of what constitutes 'community' are significant in determining what activities and individuals or groups are marked as features of crime-talk in these settings. Drawing on interviews and focus group data gathered in a West Australian mining community undergoing rapid socio-economic redefinition, the paper examines *how* crime-talk is an artifact of specific social figurations and the relative ability of groups to act as cohesive and integrated networks.

Crime-talk in rural and isolated settings

Studies of fear of crime have largely been conducted in urban settings (Lee 2007:115), which is hardly surprising given the tendency in the social sciences to present rural and isolated settings as relatively crime free zones (Scott et al. 2007; Hogg & Carrington 2006). Indeed, Tonnies' dichotomy between *gemeinschaft* and *gessellschaft* has provided the most common analytical framework for the discussion of urban/rural differences in the social sciences. It resonates in popular cultural oppositions between the city as the site of an artificially imposed (and fragile) order and the rural as a naturally ordered,

bonded and cohesive community. These early accounts that presented rural 'communities' as stable and homogenous are now considered problematic because of their neglect of rural 'Others' who have been painted out of the rural landscape (Philo 1997). In a similar vein, Murdoch and Pratt (1997) have drawn attention to 'strange ruralities' in order to highlight difference and division in the countryside, especially the problems of power and stratification in rural settings (see, also, Liepens 2000:326-327).

Crime-talk can provide a valuable insight into the construction and policing of rural social orders. Fear of crime has been one of the most frequently studied areas of rural criminology, with studies first emerging in the early 1970s, mostly in the US and Great Britain. Early research tended to conclude that urban residents were more fearful of crime than rural residents (Boggs 1971; Shapland and Vagg 1985; Donnermeyer and Kreps 1986). This research indicated that lower victimisation rates in rural areas explained lower rates of fear of crime and a general low level of concern with crime. Later research, during the 1980s and 1990s, drew more mixed conclusions, with some research finding that rural people were more fearful of crime than urban people or only minor variations in each cohort. In the US, research in fast growing rural and isolated communities indicated that social change was linked with increase anxiety for criminal victimisation (Krannich et al. 1985, Fruedenburg and Jones 1991; Smith 2001). Donnermeyer and Mullen (1987) suggested recent in-migrants to towns experience higher levels of fear of crime than longer term residents because they lacked integration into local social social structures. Austin, Woolever and Baba (1994) found that those more involved in communities felt safer, a finding which is mirrored in other research on fear of crime in rural areas. Hunter Kranich and Smith (2002) link crime to boom periods. Hunter et al. (2002) conclude the timing of migration to be important to the fear of crime relationship, with boom town residents experiencing greater fear of crime than longer term residents or post–boom residents. McGarrell et al. (1997) found that social disorder was linked to fear of crime in as much as social disorder was symbolic of weakening social controls.

In Britain, studies of rural crime have recently engaged with cultural geography, setting the ground for a move away from the concept of fear of crime towards a consideration of what we have previously termed crime-talk. As with McGarrell's (1997) research, studies have argued that that people in rural communities are not actually fearful of crime itself, but are concerned with what they perceive as the threat to their rural idyll (Marshall and Johnson 2005). Surveys indicate social disorder and unwelcome individuals and groups are associated with crime, which presents as a breakdown of social cohesion, and a loosening moral standards (Marshall and Johnson 2005). Loader et al. (2000) showed how crime talk was used in an English village to highlight desirable and undesirable qualities of place and social activities. For Yarwood and Gardner (2000) criminality is equated with a cultural threat and social activities associated with crime are inconsistent with dominant views of symbolic rural order. Little et al. (2005) in a study of the Otago Valley in New Zealand, similarly found that the social construction of space and place influences the way in which fear is perceived and experienced. While an association between rurality and fear of strangers is well-established in the literature, they emphasise that how we view rurality has implications for who is defined as strangers and threats. Notions of safety are embedded in social constructions of the rural idyll. The safety of rural communities is at-risk from those who do not belong – often outsiders from urban areas (Little et al. 2005). They observe that ".. the idea that fear of crime is a fixed and measurable entity has been replaced by an acknowledgement of the complexity of fear as a response to crime and of its variability between individuals." (Little et al. 2005: 155). For these authors, fear should be located within wider discussion of power, highlighting the idea that fear is linked to social marginalisation (Little et al. 2005). Yarwood and Gardner (2000) make a similar point by linking rurality, criminality and culture to help to understand marginalisation and exclusion of certain groups in rural spaces (Yarwood and Gardner 2000). They also suggest that more research required on fears of crime held by different groups in rural areas, involving a closer examination of the shifting boundaries between criminality and culture and how they are negotiated and defined (Yarwood and Gardner 2000). The current research takes up this challenge by examining established-outsider relations in an isolated Australian

mining community. However, we note that while culture and space may define the quality of crime-talk, it is also important to understand how crime talk is mobilised in particular settings. Important to this is an understanding of localised social structures and power relations.

One of the first accounts of fear of crime in a rural Australian setting was by Wilson and Brown (1973). As with US and British studies of this period, they tended to view crime as largely absent in rural areas and fear as crime as an urban phenomenon. O'Connor and Gray's (1987) study of the rural Australian town of Walcha. Walcha was a relatively culturally-homogenous community with strong agricultural roots. In Walcha crime was considered virtually non-existent, but if crime was accounted for, it was associated with outsiders. This strong externalisation of crime can be partly explained by Walcha's geographic isolation and strong intergenerational and horizontal ties to locale. Thus when crimes did occur, they were not perceived as threatening. Offenders tended to be strangers, rather than known others. Blaming the outsider sustained internal social order. The authors argued concern about crime may actually be concern about unwanted social change – a threat to 'how the place used to be'. In a similar vein, Dempsey's (1990) study of community structure and social problems in a small Victorian town illustrated how labeling and social marginalisation of groups known as 'no hopers' assisted in the allocation of blame for most crime problems. More recently Lee (2007:121) studied fear of crime in three rural communities in New South Wales, arguing that divergent responses from the same town reflect: the symbolic dimensions of crime in the locality; each respondent's stake in particular forms of crime talk; and, the broader conditions of possibility for crime talk.

These studies tended to focus attention on rural farming towns. A more recent study of a Queensland coal mining region (Lockie et al. 2009), found that lack of social integration in the region was linked to perceptions of crime. Lack of social integration among residents of Nebo Shire promoted a sense that they were at greater risk of crime following an influx of large number of unknown and temporary residents in the region, residing in camp-style accommodation around the town. Recorded crimes against the person (especially sexual assault) in Nebo and the surrounding shire in the Bowen Basin, a site of significant new mining activity, increased significantly, rising from 300 per 100,000 in 1999 to 2483 per 100,000 in 2003, while overall crime rates remained relatively low (Lockie et al., 2009: 336). Police believed crime increases were proportional to population increases in the region during the period of the mining operations. In Nebo the focus of residents was not on sexual assault, but on property crime and general anti-social behaviour (such as drunkenness).

The research on crime-talk in rural and isolated communities, in the Australian context, suggests the threat of crime may be located in terms of internal and external sources of communal threat. Typically external crime threats involve an urban stranger, while internal threats have been associated with groups such as youth and/or racial minorities. This noted, race was less of an issue in the ethnically homogenous community of Walcha (see O'Connor and Gray 1987, above), in which Aboriginal people were geographically separated on an old mission site. In this respect, Walcha presented as an atypical community with regard to most studies of rural crime conducted in Australia. Hogg and Carrington (2006) in their analysis of law and order politics in rural Australia, argued that perceptions of crime and community were heavily influenced by race (Hogg and Carrington 2006:161; see, also, Jobes et al. 2005). Fear of crime is significant in terms of not only what is said, but what is not said. Hogg and Carrington indicated that crime-talk in rural settings tends to ignore interpersonal violence and exaggerate the extent of property crime. Moreover, Aboriginal violence is highlighted, while non-Aboriginal violence tends to be ignored, remaining 'hidden' and pervasive' (Hogg and Carrington 2006:149). Indeed, as Scott et al. (2007:1) have noted: '…crime outside the city [in Australia] is not so much spatialised as it is racialised.'[i] This is not to deny the reality of Aboriginal involvement in crime, both as victims and perpetrators, but rather highlights the significance of racial politics in defining the crimogenic order in rural and isolated Australian settings. Similarly, gender is to be considered significant in defining what constitutes *the* crime problem in rural and isolated settings.

It is no small irony that Indigenous Australians, who, historically, have been violently displaced from their lands and culture, have been repeatedly characterised as an uncivilised presence in the landscape from which they have been displaced. One mark of this incivility is a perceived capacity for social disorder, especially violence. What links Aboriginals and the 'outsiders' who were blamed for crime in Walcha, is that both do not conform with an imagined sense of 'community' which pervades the rural spaces they inhabit. Aboriginals are, again with some irony, regularly marginalized to the status of 'outsiders' in rural and isolated settings. This noted, the historic segregation of Aboriginal people to the margins of rural communities has placed real limitations on their presence and visibility in many rural settings. When Aboriginal people are visible it is all too often in relation to crime (as perpetrators), disrupting what has, until recently, been the unquestioned gemeinschaft relations of the rural social order (see Hogg and Carrington 2007). The apparent ambiguous and inarticulate of status of Aboriginal people within the rural social order can stimulate fear: they do not conform to the idealised images of 'traditional' Indigenous people which dominate the imagined space of the rural idyll (see Bell 1997). Nor do they belong in the 'white' community. They are not part of the landscape, not its past or its future. As Douglas (1966:96) observed in her classic analysis of pollution:

> Danger lies in transitional states, simply because transition is neither one state or the next, it is indefinable. The person who must pass from one state to another is himself in danger and emanates danger to other (Douglas 1966: 96).

There appears to be no identifiable broader processes through which various narratives of crime-talk can be linked, other than the suggestion that various groups which are marked out as the perpetrators of crime, tend to be in some way structurally disadvantaged (class) or socially stigmatised (race). What is missing from the literature is an account of *how* crime-talk is a mechanism by which socio-structural division, disadvantage and stigmatisation are produced and maintained. However not all crime-talk has as its focus structurally disadvantaged groups. Affluent or high-status groups can also be subject to crime-talk. The distinctive contribution of our paper is to take an example of where a relatively privileged group of predominantly non-Aboriginal, high–earning males in the mining industry can be socially constructed as outsiders and subject to crime talk.

Established-Outsider relations

Norbert Elias' figurational sociology can be helpful in understanding how crime-talk is strategically deployed in rural settings, especially places with unstable population dynamics. In particular we want to refer to Elias' account of established-outsider-relations, developed through a classic community study he conducted with Scotson during the late 1950s. What is valuable about the study is the way in which the authors examined a community without marked ethnic or class differences. Yet, they discovered mechanisms of social exclusion which operate on a broad basis.

Winston Parva (pseudonym) was a suburban settlement on the outer fringes of an industrial city located in the Midlands of England. Elias and Scotson (1994) documented a social cleavage between the older and newer residents who had been relocated there after the Second World War. The older or 'established' residents of Winston Parva presented as a cohesive and tightly integrated group, while the newer residents, or 'outsiders', were less cohesive and subject to stigmatisation from the established group. Typically, the newer or 'outsider' group was presented as lacking in civilised standards, especially those pertaining to bodily integrity and control. For example, the outsiders were blamed for various forms of social disorder in the community and characterised as dirty, uncouth and violent. Crime and delinquency was an important element in constructing established-outsider relations (Elias and Scotson 1994:101).

To explain the social dynamics of this community, Elias and Scotson avoided traditional explanations of stigmatisation and discrimination, associated with forms of stratification, such as educational, occupational, religious, ethnic and class differences: social exclusion and stigmatisation can exist independent of any of these variables. Both communities in Winston Parva were working class and

exhibited similar socio-cultural characteristics. The only significant difference evident between the groups was the social oldness and cohesion of the established group. In contrast, the newcomers had lacked the time to build up social cohesion and, subsequently, lacked common identification and shared practices. In this way, Elias and Scotson (1994) examined the groups' ability to organise itself as an important power differential.

They argue that an established group tends to attribute to outsider groups as a whole the 'bad' characteristics of that groups 'worst' section – its perceived 'anomic' minority. In contrast, the self-image of the 'nomic' group is based on perceived attributes of a minority of its members (Elias 1992:xix). The more unequal the balance of power is between groups, the more distorted is the image of outsiders produced by the establishment group. Just as we accept that the emotional fantasies of individual people are not arbitrary, being the product of social relations, collective fantasies of praise and blame also have a diachronic and developmental character (Mennell 1992: 138).

Significantly, given our consideration of crime-talk, gossip is an important element in such relations as it provides a means by which people can demonstrate 'their fervent adherence to their own group norms by expressing their shock and horror at the behavior of those who do not conform. The high organisation of social networks among established groups facilitated the flow of gossip (Elias 1994:89). Gossip can be used to produce a stereotypical representation of the outsider, but it can also be used to reinforce a groups solidarity. Thus, gossip operates to both denigrate and idealise aspects of certain social figurations, especially when it is exaggerated. Through gossip, the everyday activities of established and outsider groups tends to be ignored and the diversity and complexity of social life is reduced to stereotypical representations which operate to maintain and reproduce existing configurations.

Elias and Scotson (1994) asserted that the mechanisms identified in Winston Parva may also operate in larger scale settings, especially given the primordial need for people to identify with the group and a general tendency for humans to establish hierarchies by monopolistic closure of status and power positions. As such, humans seize every opportunity to construct established-outsider figurations. An account of established-outsider relations may be helpful in understanding how crime-talk is generated and maintained over periods of time. It may also account for the complex dynamics of power relations in diverse settings, notably here between small and larger scale social settings. Elias and Scotson are especially relevant to rural communities where notions of length of residence and age of families have been shown to affect social dynamics, being important indicators of status and authority (Wild 1974).

Context

> I think there's been this split of the town… there's fly-in fly-out [FIFO] and I've heard people say: 'Fit-in or fuck-off' and that's a view that I've heard from people that stay in the community. So they might sense that all these FIFO workers are creating all the problems for the community and creating all these problems for them and they'll be drinking at the pub and someone got beaten to death... (Amy, service provider)

In the above passage, Amy, who works and resides in the mining region of Armstrong (pseudonym for a township located in a Very Remote Region in Western Australia), draws a link between fly-in-fly-out (FIFO) workers and social problems, such as violence. FIFO is a commonly used acronym in the Armstrong region to describe non-resident workers. FIFO workers typically live in the state capital, Perth, and 'commute' to work for a short periods of time, usually fourteen days and have a seven day break. Numbers of FIFOs in the region have increased dramatically in recent years, increasing ten-fold since 2006, a result of high international demand for energy resources. In this environment, it has become more economical for resource companies to shift their *modus operandi* in remote locations to commute operations that rely on a non-resident workforce, instead of constructing permanent communities that require maintenance and on-going capital overheads (Storey, 2001:135; Carrington et al 2010). These non-resident workers are sometimes housed within the resource town itself,

generally in accommodation supplied or heavily subsidised by a resource organisation or contractor company. More commonly, they live in single person quarters in specially constructed camps which might be within or adjacent to a town, a few kilometres away, or quite isolated. The camps are typically constructed of rows of 'dongas' – air conditioned, identically designed units that resemble temporary holiday-park style accommodation. The camps provide meals and other daily living requirements such as laundry services, transportation, and sport and recreational facilities including a 'wet mess' which serves alcohol. This environment is partly a response to the geographic location of camps on the margins of communities which lack adequate public transport options. Self-containment of the camps also reflects a desire by companies to ensure tight supervision and control over the non-resident workforce. The camps are usually privately policed by contracted security guards.

Much Australian research has focused on purpose built mining towns in the remote Pilbara region of Western Australia and mining communities in the Bowen Basin in Queensland (Rolfe et al, 2007; Lockie et al 2009). A problem for such towns was that they lacked critical mass of population to provide comprehensive human services, attract secondary investment or create a balanced socio-demographic structure (Petkova et al. 2009: 212). . During the 1980s quality of life issues saw movement away from attempts to resource inadequate infrastructure in these towns and the establishment of a non-resident workforce structure (Lockie et al. 2009). Non-resident workforce arrangements involve periodic absences of workers from their permanent residences and structuring of operations around compressed work schedules of typically 12 hours shifts. Several days/nights of work is typically followed by an extended period of leave (Lockie et al. 2009). The literature suggest that FIFO operations, especially the long hours of shiftwork, place physical strains on workers, which place them and others at risk to safety, both inside and outside of work. FIFO has also been identified as dislocating workers from community and family life, thus causing social and economic isolation. Research has found that miners and their partners suffered higher rates of psychological stress than other rural people due to social isolation from family; boredom, climate, sexual need, transient nature of community life; and alcohol abuse (Lockie et al. 2009). Research has also noted benefits of FIFO for workers, such as opportunities to earn high incomes, to have flexibility in where they live, and to use extended periods of leave to pursue recreational interest for additional income (Lockie et al. 2009; Houghton 1993).

Tensions between non-resident workers and permanent residents (or according to Amy those people who *stay* in the community) in mining communities have been well-documented, there being a general understanding that FIFO operations provide less social and economic benefits to rural and regional areas than other forms of mining (Pick et al. 2008; Storey 2001: 135). Resentment and conflict also occur because unskilled and semi-skilled miners, in such regions, often earn more money and occupy better and cheaper housing than professional workers (Petkova et al. 2009: 212). ' Fly-over' effects are accused of ignoring local suppliers of goods and services, leading to considerable concern in areas such as Pilbara (Houghton 1993:297). Data indicates that 78 per cent of salaries earned in the Armstrong leave the region. Overall, regions with a more diverse industry and development base are more likely to retain economic gains produced by mining booms (NATSEM 2010). The impact of camps on the housing market has been dramatic, resulting in acute housing shortages, reduction in housing affordability and concomitant increases in property values and rent. There is high population turn-over in these towns, with most people planning to stay for 4-5 years.

The Armstrong Region is arid and thinly populated. During the late nineteenth century, European settlement in the region was linked to pastoral and agricultural concerns. These industries experienced decline during the twentieth century. The foremost community within the Armstrong Region is Pemberton. Pemberton, with its 10,000 inhabitants, has undergone and continues to experience rapid expansion due to ongoing resource development, mining, construction and transport (see Carrington et al 2010). Originally Pembleton was a purpose-built company town founded in the 1960s. This was a time when resource companies all over the world were 'dependent on local labour' (Acker 2004: 26)

and when, in Australia, consent for 'greenfield' mining activity was often dependent on the establishment of purpose-built service towns (Thomas et al. 2006). This noted, pastoral concerns continue to be prominent in region, along with the more recent development of tourism industries. Pemberton is a central administrative and retail hub for the Armstrong region.

Non-resident workers represented almost a quarter of the population (24 per cent) of Pemberton on the 2006 Census night, compared to 5 per cent nationally. Since that period numbers in the camps have increased to the extent that in 2010 they comprise approximately 50 per cent of the population of Pemberton and a third of the population of Balandin, a smaller coastal community less than an hour drive from Pemberton, which is a third the size of Pemberton. One reason why little money is spent in the region is that the camps are largely self-sufficient and highly contained. Everyday life is highly regulated in the camps.

The tight labor situation for resource industry employers in remote areas has been accompanied by elevated incomes. For example, almost half (49 per cent) the resident workforce in Pemberton stated that they earned at least $1,000 per week compared with a national total of 20 per cent. In resource boom towns, labor force participation rates are usually high, as exemplified by the 72 per cent participation rate for Pemberton in the 2006 Census in comparison with 60 per cent for Australia. Non-resident workers are not included in this data. A recent report estimated that people in the Armstrong Region receive monthly salary payments up to 62 per cent higher than the national average. This noted, workers not employed in mining or construction generally earn lower salaries. For every $100 earned by a mining employee in 2010, $82 was earned in manufacturing, $74 by transport workers, $70 technical professionals, $55 government employees, $48 social service providers and $29 retail workers. In contrast, construction sector employees earned $110 for every $100 earned in mining (NATSEM 2010).

Pemberton is an unusual town in the Australian experience, in that it is isolated and considers itself 'rural', but lacks a strong Aboriginal presence (less than 3 per cent of population in Pemberton and the nearby Balandin) in a region where Aboriginal numbers are relatively high in comparison to other regions of Australia. Most Aboriginal people living in the region cannot afford to reside in Armstrong because of the high cost of housing and living expenses, instead they live in Culbertson, a town an hour drive from Pemberton, with a predominantly (80 per cent) Aboriginal population (described by one participant as a 'blackfella's town'). Studies of mining regions suggest that the marginal position of Aboriginal people in the wider community had been reinforced by the mining (Lockie te al. 2009). Purpose built mining towns are characterised by low employment of Indigenous people, because industrial relations policies tended to favour employment of people with previous mining industry experience, so fewer opportunities for the Indigenous population to access required training for job opportunities. FIFO projects also excluded Aboriginal communities from potential involvement with pick-up points situated outside such communities (Petkova et al. 2009: 212). In this respect, Armstrong has some similarities with the town of Walcha, which was the focus of O'Connor and Gray's (1987) study, in that it is relatively ethnically homogenous.

Method

The following data is drawn from face-to-face and group interviews with thirty-eight people who lived in the Armstrong Region. We selected key stake-holders from a cross section of the community and the justice profession, including the local magistrate and chief of police. Twenty-six participants lived in Pemberton, eight in Balandin, two in Culbertson and two living outside of these townships. The data forms a subset examining perceptions of crime, from a larger Australian Research Council grant on masculinity and violence in rural communities. Approximately two-thirds of those interviewed lived in the main centre of Pemberton. Eighteen participants were male. Thirty-one participants were Australian born, with three identifying as Aboriginal. Ages ranged from: one person in 18-25 age range; 13 people in 26-45 age year range; 21 people in the 46-55 year range; and two people aged over

65 years of age. Interviews in the region involved people who were largely 'long term' residents with firm social ties with the local towns of the region. For example, of those interviewed, 38 worked in a volunteer capacity in the region. A number were so well-established as to have formalised leadership roles in the community, and areas such as local government. Many of those interviewed were also service providers. Of those interviewed: 22 worked for local or state governments; nine were from private enterprise; and eight worked for non-government organisations. In terms of roles, 18 were service workers, eight professionals, seven managers, four in trades and one person worked in administration.

As previously indicated, pseudonyms have been used to refer to both the region and towns involved in the study. The data presented in this paper is part of a national study involving a number of other towns, ranging in size from small (under 2,000) to large (over 10,000). Data collection has involved exploration of a number of sensitive issues relating to violence, gender, men's health and community safety and wellbeing. As such, an important ethical consideration of the research was the assurance of anonymity for participants, many of whom, as noted here are prominent members of their community. It is notable that the communities involved in the study were often characterised by limited, but highly visible, service provision, making it possible to identify individuals according to roles they occupied (for example, communities would have one magistrate). Institutional ethical clearances for the study were granted on the basis that communities would not be named and individual identities would not disclosed. Participants were also given this assurance both at and prior to interviews. The selection of communities was data driven in the first instance. The high cost involved in both travelling to the region and securing accommodation, required that most interviews were pre-arranged to fit into a tight four day schedule.

Of those interviewed, 30 participants noted the length of time they had lived in the community (this information was not specifically collected in interviews). Nine had spent less than two years in the region, 6 had spent between 2-10 years in the region, 5 had spent between 11-20 years in the region, seven had spent 21-30 years in the region, and 3 people had lived in the region for over 31 years. This is notable when considering relatively high population turnover in the region. Of those interviewed, community leaders, as opposed to service providers, had spent the longest periods of time resident in the region.[ii] The majority of the interviews were one-to-one. Group interviews involved between two and four persons.

The bias towards longer term residents can be explained by the use of case sampling to recruit participants. In terms of selecting participants, sample bias rather than generalisability was of concern. We selected participants who could provide the best data: that is, information rich participants and key stakeholders.. This allowed us to purposively sample participants in each study location who were regarded as representative of the wider population. We relied upon the altruism and personal interests of these individuals, who comprised community leaders and service providers, to inform our research. These persons were identified through community services and telephone directories. Of course, the identification of someone as 'typical' is a matter of interpretation, but by pursuing certain groups, communities and organisations, we broadened the base of respondent types (Minichiello et al. 2008: 173). Recruitment of informants was dependent on an initial approach by letter and invitation to participate. Advertising was also attempted as a means of recruitment, acknowledging that this method is often unsuccessful. So it proved to be for this research, with no participants recruited using this approach. Leaflets or 'flyers' distributed through organisations and local business, newsletters and posters displayed in public places within the study locations were also unsuccessful. In the main, there was awareness of the relevance of and hence interest in the research topic. Nevertheless, a number of difficulties were encountered in recruiting participants due in part to the sensitivity of the topic and to the lack of access to some groups. 'Gatekeepers' delaying or withholding access to people or denying organisational involvement was a repetitive complication. This noted, FIFOs lacked visibility in the region, not being represented by specific organisational bodies other than the companies they worked

for, which created a highly controlled environment which restricted access to this population. The fact that FIFOs were not well-integrated into the community – were 'outsiders' – rendered access to this population difficult. Moreover, the significance of this population, in terms of crime-talk, was only revealed following interviews with 'established' residents of the region. The focus of the current study is not to establish the authenticity of claims made regarding FIFOs, but to examine 'audience' perceptions of this population as an outsider group. In this respect the paper follows a well-worn path in studies of social deviance pioneered by symbolic interactionist research which focused on the definition and interpretation of deviance (see, for example, Becker 1966; Schur 1971).

We used a semi-structured interview schedule. Questions from these sessions examined perspectives on rural masculinities, men's violence, and related policy issues. At the end of interview sessions, participants completed a basic survey which allowed overall demographic characteristics to be assessed. All interviews were recorded using unobtrusive digital voice recorders. In addition, notes were taken of relevant incidents or particularly pertinent points.

The average recorded time of all interviews was 52 minutes. All interview data were transcribed, coded and thematically analysed (Spradley 1979). Thematic analysis was used to distill in-depth information from the data (Marks and Yardley 2004). Each transcription was analysed in turn for passages and/or content of a type which referenced issues, events, experiences and opinions that might inform relevant research elements. Recurring themes were established by colour coding transcript margins and re-grouping into conceptual constructs. In this way, an initial skeleton of analytic codes which reflected recurring themes and patterns was progressively developed until a 'codebook' evolved (Miles and Huberman 1994).

Results

While our research was primarily centered on violence and men, participants interviewed spoke extensively about 'community'. Stories of violence and men were used to highlight broad problems of social order in the Armstrong region. In this way crime-talk functioned as a condensation symbol, associated with a range of anxieties linked with social change and disruption. As illustrated below, crime-talk in the Armstrong region was often indistinguishable from gossip, incorporating a range of social behaviours, ranging from deviant to criminal. As Elias and Scotson observed in Winston Parva, gossip was a device by to distinguish and amplify what were considered to be the worst qualities, real or imagined, among FIFO workers and generalise these to the group as a whole.

Interestingly, participants did not define social disorder in Pemberton as an Aboriginal problem. Lack of reference to Aboriginal people may be explained by their low presence in Pemberton. Aboriginal issues were strongly associated with the smaller township of Culbertson, which was presented as a dysfunctional community. Here, as Elias and Scotson observed in their research, presumed characteristics of the few were used to create generalisations concerning the whole. As one participant said of Pemberton: 'It's very much a white town... the majority employed'. Despite this, there were some pointed references to Aboriginal people and social disorder, especially among older participants who had lived in the area for over 20 years (prior to the dramatic increases in house prices through the mining boom). Mike, a community leader who had lived in the region for 38 years stated:

> …they're fairly messy, drop rubbish all over the place... It seems to me that a lot of the white folk started to copy their habits: a lot of rubbish on the ground. And also a bit of the mentality of, you know: 'dirty Abos, Aboriginals, are on the drip [welfare payments]. Why shouldn't I be as well?'

Here race is deployed as a symbolic marker of declining moral standards among non-Aboriginal members of the community. Ingrid, another community leader, who had lived in the region for over thirty years felt that different standards operated when dealing with Aboriginal problems:

> If a 12 year old girl was pregnant in the town I come from, all hell would break loose. But there are 12 year old kids in [Culbertson] who are pregnant, who are having babies, and no one bats an eyelid. Now there's got to be something wrong there.

There was a strong sense among those who spoke about these issues that Aboriginal problems were not only caused by lack of external governance, but also a lack of individual and social control within the Aboriginal community. Such attitudes run at odds with most research indicating that Aboriginal offending is largely associated with environmental and locational factors of living in small and isolated communities, such as Cullbterson, which lacked the breadth of welfare services to address socio-economic issues affecting this population (higher rates of poverty, unemployment, poor housing, poor health, lower educational attainment) (see Cunneen 2007). While the entrenched multidimensional nature of poverty in Aboriginal communities needs to be considered in any explanation of offending. Moreover, while the visibility of the high incidence of intra-community violence amongst Aboriginal people remains high in official and popular discourse, the pervasiveness of high rates of non-Indigenous violence is rarely acknowledged (Hogg and Carrington 2007:133-149). One participant stated that Aboriginal people exhibited 'disgraceful' parenting. Elaine, a community leader, who had lived in the region for over 20 years observed:

> It's definitely their behavior, you know, lack of good parenting skills. You know, different ways of disciplining their kids, they're just hitting into them, so they're just teaching them violence from a very early age.

While many problems in Aboriginal communities are blamed on lack of work ethic, some participants considered that employment with mining companies (which paid good salaries) was causing Aboriginal social problems. One participant argued that Aboriginal people had too much money and spent too much time at work, not attending to their families. Another observed: 'Aboriginals don't handle money well, I'm afraid.'

As in Walcha, crime in Pemberton was largely associated with 'outsiders', in particular the FIFO workers. That these were urban men, whose main residence was in metropolitan centres was also frequently noted. There was a strong perception among participants that FIFO cultures were *anti-social* and did not belong in the 'community' . For example, Pemberton was not considered by some participants to represent an authentic rural community because of the impact of mining cultures. John, a local community leader, thought that the increase in FIFOs had resulted in people living in close proximity, more traffic, and caravans and dongas [makeshift shelters] in backyards. There was some consensus among participants that the mining boom had resulted in negative impacts, such as housing shortages and high cost housing. Moreover, there was the problem that mining was a volatile industry, which 'sucked' resources out of the community, giving little in return. The presence of mining operations, especially FIFO workers, made Pemberton something other than rural. One participant distinguished between a 'bush' town, defined by its mining industry, and a rural town, defined by agriculture. Gessellschaft was associated with patterns of work, especially shift work. Most participants considered the work patterns of mining to have produced negative impacts for the community, especially with regard to violent crime and other forms of anti-social behavior. Ron, a service provider with links to pastoral industries, stated:

> In this area, people are less inclined to participate in and contribute to the community to the same extent as would normally occur in a rural community. People work long hours but the time they have available might be limited. Their roster does provide them with time off 'but they'd probably generally prefer to go fishing on those days rather than [do things] for the community interest.

The general gripe against FIFOs was that they contributed nothing to 'the community'. Mary, a service provider and recent arrival to the region, stated:

> There are some FIFO workers that really play-up once they get here, away from the normal responsibilities of family and city life and so indulge a little bit. So there are a few of them that give everybody else a bad name. They're always being accused of littering and causing problems and anti-social behavior.

The situation between local community members and FIFOs was described as 'us and them'. Max, a community leader, who had spent 27 years in Pemberton, observed:

> They are disconnected. They are not part of our community... What we're seeing here now, these are not good construction workers; these are the shit at the bottom of the barrel... it's because the good ones are paid proper rates and they're working elsewhere... They've just got the dribble here now and you're seeing that time and time again in social disturbances and stuff like that.

In a similar vein, Mike stated:

> They're sort of desperados, you know. Sort of a last chance, if you like, at having a go at life: society's drop outs...

For many participants, extravagant use of leisure time, especially fishing, symbolised the excessive consumption culture of a mining community. Fishing was considered an indulgent pastime which marginalised women and families. While fishing was a widespread leisure activity in the region, with about a third of residents owning boats, it was associated with mining cultures. In terms of public life, lack of involvement in activities defined as communal - especially sport - was indicative of the breakdown of social life. Excessive alcohol consumption was especially emblematic of the supposed gessellschaft behaviors that had invaded the community, along with drugs, which were imported from the cities. Excessive drinking, despite being acknowledged as part of the towns' much longer term culture, was typically associated with FIFO workers.

Some participants suggested that FIFOs lacked foresight and were incapable of taking responsibility for their actions, with Robert stating that they 'have no thought of what something they do could lead to.' In this way, they were presented as similar to Aboriginal people, who were also thought to lack such civilised controls. The idea of FIFO cultures being indifferent to community interests was reiterated strongly by most participants, be they long-term of short-term residents of the Armstrong Region. A magistrate who had spent less than a year serving the community observed:

> This community is so unstable…People come here for short periods of time, they earn truckloads of money and then disappear. And it's kind of like, "on a vacation" mentality and it doesn't matter because this is not my real life, my real life is down in Perth, my real life is back in Melbourne my real life is over there. So what I do here doesn't really count... Because there is such a large proportion of fly-in fly-out and they have no association whatsoever with the community and they don't give a rat's arse about the community one way or the other.

The phrase 'work hard, play hard' was used on a number of occasions to describe the mining culture of Pemberton. Echoing this theme, Melanie, a service provider, who had spent three years in the region, said:

> There's a lot of people earning big bucks here. I tend to think it goes to the guys' heads and they think they can do whatever they like. They work hard; they drink a lot…

This phrase was grounded in the idea that men in the mining industry worked hours, allowing them little time to spend on community or family activities, while leisure time (play) was considered an opportunity to indulge in alcohol and drug consumption, street violence and commercial sex, supplied by fly-in-fly out sex-workers). These activities were used to highlight a lack of investment among men in 'home' life. FIFOs were both over and under sexed. [The] prostitution, which was presented as endemic to the FIFO camps was contrasted to the 'family' life of locals.. Gossip was important in

constructing mine industry workers as other. One participant provided an example of a husband who asked his wife to leave the family home with their two children, so he could have a local stripper move in. It was thought by some participants that gender imbalance lead to promiscuity on the part of miners, who had 'hydraulic' like sex drives It was claimed that local women and families could not go out for dinner at night because men would make aggressive sexual advances towards women. Shift workers were unlikely to have families and it was this absence of 'family' which was in opposition to the gemeinschaft values associated with rural life. One community leader provided the example of going to a bar with 200 people, 197 of whom would be men and the other three, bar maids. These abnormal conditions were considered typical of the impact of FIFO cultures on the towns. Family life was considered to be in decline, while pubs were described as 'unpleasant, anti-social' places where men congregate to be away from home-life and other social constraints.

Much of the excessive indulgence in 'play' was considered to result from mining industry workers being over-paid. There was a perception that they did not work harder than 'locals'. Mandy stated '…they get everything given to them', a suggestion echoing the notion that Aboriginal people in the region were addicted to welfare benefits. The extravagance of the lifestyles of miners was regularly referred to in relation to their ownership of 'toys', especially boats, but including cars. In addition to 'boys toys' one participant cited high maintenance payments and abortions as symptomatic of social disorder and the declining moral fabric in Pemberton. The higher end salaries of FIFOs were presented as the typical salary of all those working in the mining industry. As Elias and Scotson observed in their research, preseumed characteristics of the few were used to create generalisations concerning the whole. Prue, a community leader who had spent 17 years in the region, stated:

> Those bloody mining people sit out there and don't pay any rates to us: they give it all to the State Government, so we don't get money from the big mining companies to support this town, which is a huge problem with us. So the infrastructure and everything's all falling down.

The idea that outsiders lacked social control because they were not embedded in the community was a consistent theme of the interviews. Being a 'genuine' local was determined by length of stay in the community. Too much diversity and transience of populations was considered a problem, there being 'nothing to bring people together'. Community was defined by the notion of neighbors knowing each other. In this way social oldness or social embeddedness, became significant markers of social belonging both in a symbolic and practical sense. One participant stated that 'they [FIFOs] destroy the social life'.

Violence was a symbolic reminder of the 'gessellschaft' and was placed in opposition to the hospitality of authentic communities. Violence was typically defined as alcohol-related male-on-male assaults . Some participants noted instances in which people were savagely attacked by strangers ('king hit') with little or no provocation. It was pub and public violence, something readily associated with the FIFO cultures and their lack of family involvement, as opposed to domestic violence, which was the focus of most participants' attention. This violence was directly linked to excessive alcohol consumption (see, for example, Carrington et al, 2010).

In Pemberton, it was thought that violence was most likely to occur at night in public places, mostly pubs. The primary site of violence was said to be a local nightclub, with Dave, a community leader who had lived in the region for over 20 years, commenting that 'every night it's a bloodbath'. Steve, a service provider, stated:

> ... it [the nightclub] should be closed down; it's a disgrace and just some of the stories you hear about aggression and so on, it's just disgusting...

Mitch, a young local laborer with a self-diagnosed 'anxiety disorder', which in the past had caused him to respond violently to strangers, considered most of the male-male violence to be caused by the FIFOs because they were sexually aggressive and disrespectful of local women. Similar to Elias and

Scotson's observations of gossip in Winston Parva, gossip in the Armstrong region regularly emphasised bodily discipline and integrity to convey ideas relating to social order. Lack of bodily control among FOFOs represented in sexual deviance and criminal violence placed this group as a uncivilized presence in the rural social order. One altercation between groups of locals and FIFO workers at a pub was described as a 'bloodbath' in which two FIFOs suffered serious injuries. The event resulted in three FIFOs being charged and losing their jobs as men in the camps have their contracts terminated if they are identified by the authorities as having been involved in violence as either victim or perpetrator.This indicates the tight controls placed on mine industry workers. The overriding perception was that FIFOs brought trouble into the space of the town. This noted, Mitch spoke of locals 'looking for trouble', who raided a men's camp causing serious injuries. Acknowledging that it was not only the FIFOs who had difficulty controlling themselves, he observed: '... that testosterone's pumping and it's frightening'. Frank, Mitch's father, likened the presence of FIFOs in pubs to an 'invasion' of outsiders. Yet, some accounts of victimisation, also noted, that FIFOs were victims of violence. Mary observed:

> I've also noticed that there's a lack of tolerance among the local men with regard to the fly in fly out workers... I don't know whether or not it's a threat or they just seem to be isolated...

While participants cited numerous examples of outrageous social behavior among FIFOs, the concern for FIFOs was not universal, with some more recent arrivals in the region questioning the degree to which FIFO culture could be held responsible for the regions perceived woes. Reports about the men's camps were mixed, some locals believing them to be hotbeds of sex and violence and others considering them relatively ordered places. Amy, claimed that FIFO had become the shorthand for telling anyone 'where to go' when there was lack of tolerance for others.

Discussion and Conclusion

This research extends the literature on rural crime-talk (see Lee 2007) by using the Elias and Scotson's account of established-outsider relations to account for generation and mobilsation of crime talk in a relatively isolated Australian mining region. Those interviewed for the study presented as a well networked and socially integrated group who were able to mobilise a dominant discourse of of crime-talk, linking social disorder to (FIFO) outsiders. What was interesting with regard to the data collected in Armstrong was the strong association between FIFO workers and various signifiers of social disorder. Lack of bodily discipline and self-control was regularly cited by participants as representative of a lack of social cohesion and order. Participants presented FIFOs as an outsider group who were morally inferior and deviant: they existed, both materially and symbolically, on the fringes of 'the community'. The notion that FIFOs should 'fit-in or fuck-off' was so prevalent as to appear as a slogan on T-shirts sold by tourism retailers in the region.FIFO culture was presented as a threat to the prevailing social order, grounded in an imagined gemienschaft construct of rural life.

At one level, crime-talk in the Armstrong region might be considered a response to 'boomtown' dynamics. Social disorganisation theorists have claimed that regions with stable populations have less crime, resulting from greater stability and tighter social control mechanisms (Carach 2000; Freudenburg 1986). During the late 1970s there was a consensus in North American literature that boomtowns were characterised by serious social problems associated with things such as increased crime and violence (see Freudenburg 1986). Wilkinson et al (1982) criticised this literature for failure to critically evaluate the 'social disruption hypothesis' and reliance on poorly documented and unreliable data. Subsequent research found rapid growth cannot universally be associated with social disruption (Wilkinson et al. 1984; Hunter et al. 2002:73). Links drawn in Australia between FIFO operations and various forms of social disorder, including crime (Story 2001: 139), might be explained with reference to increased *fear* of crime (Hunter et al. 2002:73; Krannish et al. 1985; McGarrell et al. 1997). Here social change is linked with increased anxiety regarding crime victimisation (Dixon 1978, Freudenburg 1978, Freudenburg and Jones 1991). Freudenburg and Jones (1991) argue that the 'people

pollution' factor – the idea that newcomers are different kinds of people who commit crimes more often – is not supported in the research (Hunter et al. 2002:76).

One perception, strongly reiterated by participants in this study, is that shift work and commuting patterns place excessive strain on family relationships. There is also the perception that mining is a patriarchal culture which encourages the expression of male power over women. Collis's (1999) study examining gender relations in 'Minetown' town, found predominance of chauvinistic attitudes towards women. Nancarrow's et al. (2009) survey of intimate partner abuse in the mining region of the Bowen Basin in Queensland, found that contrary to concerns expressed by human service providers, their study suggested women in mining cultures do not experience greater levels of abuse than do women in the general community. They concluded that concerns among service providers were a product of perceptions of the industry and the link drawn between patriarchal beliefs, and practices such as excessive alcohol consumption, and partner abuse. However, this work has not examined how these anxieties are bound up in a wider context of meaning and significance, involving use of metaphors and narratives about social change.

If we are to examine the social dynamics of the Armstrong region through the lens of established-outsider relations, miners, especially FIFO workers, pose an externalised threat to the rural idyll. In the words of a participant cited above, they were 'the shit at the bottom of the barrel'. As such, this paper supports recent research which has examined linking rurality, criminality and culture to help to understand marginalisation and the exclusion of certain groups in rural spaces (McGorrell et al. 1997; Yarwood and Gordan 2000; Little et al. 2005; Lee 2007). What is interesting about the characterisation of FIFOs as anomic is that they do not conform to traditional definitions of a structurally disadvantaged group and/or rural 'other'. They were not ethnically or racially distinct from those people we interviewed. Nor were there significant economic distinctions between mine workers and those we interviewed. While mine industry workers enjoyed high incomes, data indicates an above average level of affluence in the Pemberton when compared to national standards. What distinguished miners, especially FIFO workers, was their lack of social oldness, which numerous studies have indicated is a particularly important symbolic and material resource in rural and isolated communities (see Wild1974). In terms of material effects, social oldness provides for organisational capacity. Their relative wealth had not shielded FIFO workers from the contempt of the established residents. It was no better illustrated than in the fact that we managed to locate and recruit resident community leaders and service providers for our study, but experienced difficulty in recruiting non-resident workers. FIFO workers did not present as a well-integrated and cohesive unit, despite attempts by locals to present them as such and to make generalisations about their behavior. Camps had distinct organisational structures, but were controlled environments. A recent Queensland study of mining found that participants in the study, including police, believed that mine industry employees were subject to high levels of surveillance and sanctions against anti-social behaviour while they were on site and in proximity of the mine. Formal surveillance included regime of testing for alcohol and other drugs, while informal surveillance operated through communication networks between service providers (Lockie et al. 2009: 336).). Petkova et al. (2009: 213) note that despite some serious social problems, mining towns in Queensland were not the socially disordered places of popular imagination, but 'surprisingly ordered and tranquil.' A recent media article quoted a 33 year old FIFO (a diver) stating that 'everything', including food and alcohol, was provided for in the camps and there was no reason to go to the towns. He observed that he avoided drinking to excess because he was breath tested for alcohol every morning.

> Basically all I do in camp is go up there to work, eat and sleep. And I do that for two weeks and then I come home to have a life (Elks 2010:7).

There is no evidence to suggest that members of the various camps, which were physically dispersed and separate from the townships, were culturally integrated. Those in traditional positions of power within the communities, tended to be long-term residents with loose links with the mining industry.

This noted, social problems endemic to the region, such as alcoholism, were isolated by participants to the camps and their inhabitants (see DHWA 2008). While FIFOs did not conform to a classical definition of a structurally disadvantaged group, terminology to describe them and their behavior was not dissimilar to that which has often been used to present Aboriginal populations as a socially disruptive element in rural settings. Despite the overall focus on non-Aboriginal violence, some participants viewed Culbertson as being a violent and generally socially dysfunctional community, with the Aboriginal population being 'out of control' and particularly prone to domestic and sexual violence. Mike stated:

> A lot of raping is part and parcel of their culture and always has been; goes on everywhere. Young girls aged seven-eight with venereal disease commonly identified at the school.

Traditional signs of Aboriginal social disorder in rural communities, such as alcohol and drug use, overcrowded dwellings, noise pollution, promiscuity, sexual assault and violence were considered to be typical of FIFOs. While numerous studies have shown that Aboriginals Australians are likely to be arrested and charged with relatively minor public order offences (Cunneen 2007), there was little evidence to show that FIFOs were being similarly policed. One reason for this may have relate to different uses of public space among each group (see White 1997). For example, much FIFO recreation occurred in the highly privatised confines of camp environments, which would seem to contradict accounts that presented this groups as invading the public spaces of the region. Another issue is that the Indigenous population of places such as Cullbertson is relatively youthful, when compared with national averages, while most FIFOs were adult males in their 20s and 30s. Participants associated littering, a sign of social disorder, with Aboriginal and FIFO cultures. As noted above, FIFOs were thought to spend money in a reckless and wanton way, showing lack of control and foresight in purchases of luxury goods, while locals would invest in the family-home and community life. Spending money on alcohol consumption was emblematic of FIFO waste and indulgence. The problems of the region, evident in unkempt amenities, were blamed on FIFO and, to a lesser extent, Aboriginal populations.

Also notable was the way in which violent crime in Culbertson was linked to the Aboriginal domestic life. The Aboriginal family is represented as a source of crime, especially with regard to sexual and gendered deviance, child abuse and delinquency. The source of criminal activity, as such, is not external to the Aboriginal community, but comes from within. In contrast, the source of crime in Pemberton is the outsider. In Pemberton the 'white' family presents as a cure for crime and social deviance (deviant sexuality, alcohol and drug abuse etc.). The space of the family contrasts with other more anomic spaces such as street, pub and workplace. The family becomes a condensation symbol through which a (gemeinschaft) imagined social order can be articulated. While the Aboriginal family, as indicated in our interviews, is subjected to high levels of public scrutiny and presented as a public problem, the integrity and respectability of non-Aboriginal family life is to be defended from public incursions, especially as it presents as a mechanism to resolve social problems (see Hogg and Carrington 2007:133-151).

Not surprisingly, the patterns of life peculiar to those who live in camps do not fit well with idealised patterns of life in rural and remote Australia. Authors note that despite problems, these towns not the socially disordered places of popular imagination, but 'surprisingly ordered and tranquil.' (Petkova et al. 2009: 213)Discussion of FIFO cultures was not merely a juxtaposition of urban and rural cultures, but it highlighted what constructs of rurality are desirable. Family, for example, became an important signifier of community standards in the Armstrong Region. Interesting here was the way in which gender was deployed to articulate differences in established-outsider relations. Numerous research has suggested that rural discourses tend to support traditional masculine constructs or what has been referred to as 'hegemonic masculinity' (Dempsey 1990; Poiner 1990, Alston 1997). Typically this

masculinity is aggressive, risk taking and prone to physical expressions of identity, especially violence. However, in the Armstrong region, participants associated aggressive masculinity with outsiders, suggesting that traditional genteel rural masculinities were communitarian in their focus. Drinking and violence, rather than being a 'traditional' aspect of frontier life was something introduced by the gessellschaft culture of mining. Yet, what needs to be noted here is the narrow way in which violence was constructed as a male-male problem which occurred in public spaces of Pemberton. Such crime carried symbolic weight as an activity which invoked the dangers of city life. When domestic or sexual violence was acknowledged, it tended to be racialised as a problem exclusive to Aboriginal communities.

Elias and Scotson's account of established-outsider relations can be helpful in understanding how crime-talk is manufactured and mobilised in a range of settings. In terms of rural settings, it draws attention to the intimacy and density of socio-spatial relationships that characterise small rural townships (Weisheit, Falcone and Wells, 1996:3). The dense social figurations which are often characteristic if rural settings have traditionally been equated with gemeinschaft qualities and more recently associated with social capital (Carrington et al. 2007) have typically been regarded as producing desirable or positive social impacts. While it is not the intent of this paper to measure or qualitatively assess the social impacts of crime-talk, Elias and Scotson's figurational framework provides a useful means of describing the diverse aspects of crime-talk in rural and isolated locations. Important elements of social capital, such as embeddedness or integration within a social sphere, may not only located within the workings of specific social figurations but also linked to power relations. In this context, crime-talk is productive of social order, performing a boundary maintenance (Erickson 1962) function by constructing the normative parameters of social figurations. In the Armstrong region crime-talk was used to simultaneously denigrate and idealise aspects of certain social figurations. The diversity and complexity of social life in the region was reduced to stereotypical and exaggerated representations, which allowed for the worst characteristics of groups, as identified in gossip, to become qualities associated with all group members. Crime-talk, with its persistent insistence to 'fit-in or fuck-off', is an important aspect of informal social control in rural and isolated settings.

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[i] One aspect of this has been that, with regard to criminological research, towns with low Aboriginal populations have been ignored or assimilated to urban centers. This raclialization of crime in Australian contexts, provides a stark contrast with the US, where inner city crime has been characterized as a racial phenomenon, representing Afro-American population as perpetrators and the 'while' population as victims (Scott et al. 2007:1; Green 2006: 436).

[ii] Partly because of the global resources boom and thirst for energy sources, many of the residents of resource towns are comparatively new arrivals. Census results show that, in 2006, many persons had moved to Pembleton within the previous five years. In fact, only about half (53%) had lived at the same address one year previously and only 27% at the time of the 2001 Census.